

Their records are more recent than his and sufficiently different to be given here, viz. Barton Mills, Suffolk v:80; Loch Garten, Easternness vi:84; Dornie, Wester Ross vii:84 and Sleat, Skye vii:88. Over the same period, I have come across *vestitus* at eight different sites (about 20 examples all told), mostly in places in the southern half of England with old oak trees, with a single example from Scotland (Arisaig, Westernness vii:73).— J.A. OWEN, 8 Kingsdown Road, Epsom, Surrey KT17 3PU.

Beetles taken at a dead Blackbird, Broadway, Worcs, spring 1990

In mid-April 1990 I placed a dead Blackbird on bare earth at Broadway, Worcestershire (SP03) and monitored beetles visiting it. The weather soon became hot, and by 30th April the corpse was well desiccated. By 14th May when the last beetles were recorded, the corpse was a scarcely recognisable husk. Seventeen species were noted, and whilst none of them are rare, I was nevertheless surprised how such a small cadaver could satisfy the requirements of so many species, and serve to demonstrate the sensitivity of their olfactory processes.

Early on, the corpse was visited by a *Platystethus nitens* (Sahlberg) (presumably diverted during a spring flight) and *Atheta harwoodi* Williams, this last regularly observed at putrefying organic matter. During a brief wet spell a female *Nicrophorus humator* (Gleditsch) oviposited beneath the corpse, and the larvae of *Calliphora* began to retreat into the earth as the weather became hot again on 30th April. This prompted the first appearance of *Saprinus semistriatus* (Scriba), ovipositing *Hister merdarius* Hoffman, and *Atholus duodecimstriatus* (Schrank). *Philonthus politus* (Linnaeus) remained for some time predated the dipterous larvae, and *Creophilus maxillosus* (Linnaeus) appeared briefly. An *Anthicus bifasciatus* (Rossi) paid some attention to the corpse at the same time. On 8th May a specimen of *Dermestes murinus* Linnaeus was observed, a rather scarce species locally with an amazing knack of turning up on corpses when they are in the optimal condition for the species.

Necrobia violacea (Linnaeus) persisted to the last scrap of usable tissue, long after *Aleochara* Spp had passed their peak.— P.F. WHITEHEAD, Moor Leys, Little Comberton, Pershore, Worcs WR10 3 EP.

The hornet *Vespa crabro* L. breeding in Richmond Park, S. London

George Else's report on bees and wasps for *British Wildlife* (Vol. 2, 118-119), in which records of the hornet *Vespa crabro* from a variety of south London suburbs, prompts me to report a record of this species in 1985. On 22nd August, 1985, during a visit to Richmond Park, I observed a number of hornets flying around the old oaks near Pen Ponds. On following them, I came across the nest which was in a hollow oak close by Pen Ponds car park. Thus, it would seem that the hornet is at least established in this area.— R.K.A. MORRIS, 241 Commonsides East, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 1HB.